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## Pacific Partnership: Basic First Responder Course in Danang, Vietnam Culminates with Mass Casualty Drill

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*By Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Charles Mahan*



The Basic First Responder Course started with basic first aid training for Vietnamese personnel that

would most likely be the first group of people on the scene of any type of casualty, with this course mostly being curtailed to teach about multiple casualties. The training consisted of rapid patient assessment to find injuries, the triage of casualties into the appropriate category and rapid bandaging and splinting for lifesaving interventions.

We trained local ambulance drivers, boating, fishing and medical accident/incident responders, and local fire department personnel. These individuals had varying degrees of medical training. The more expert personnel in the course had a lot of hands on experience having seen and responded to many medical incidents, but very little formal training to teach them the most appropriate way to take care of these injuries.

The instructors tasked with providing this training were headed up by four independent duty corpsmen from varying backgrounds. They were assisted by corpsmen from Mercy with backgrounds in combat training, dermatology and nephrology.

The material was interpreted during the lectures and then demonstrated with hands on instruction. I saw most of the learning take place in the hands on training, with the Vietnamese asking lots of questions.

The training culminated in a coastal medical drill that was a simulated mass casualty incident. My students became first responders side-by-side with other PP15 personnel from Mercy. They were combined two-by-two on the same team to perform rapid assessment, lifesaving interventions and rapid transport of all casualties out of a simulated unstable environment. The teams integrated into a well versed group and performed the drill with no complications.

Even with the language barrier and initial differences in training, the Basic First Responder Course we conducted was the same for both the Vietnamese and the U.S. teams, and with similar training, they were able to integrate well and communicate in a well-choreographed manner. It was truly an honor to be part of this historic training opportunity between these two nations.

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